

**Abstract 491**

**TITLE:** Sexual Minority Youth: Overcoming Prevention Barriers in Diverse Communities

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**ISSUES:** GBQ youth at high risk of HIV /AIDS are frequently overlooked in school and community-based education models. Sexual minority youth often do not disclose their sexual orientation for many reasons, including homophobia, family pressures, religious beliefs, threat of violence, etc. External pressure sometimes can be unavoidable and is one of the reasons why gay youth are two to three times more likely than heterosexuals to attempt suicide—often a cry for help and a drastic indicator of low self-worth. One of every two people with HIV became infected during adolescence or early adulthood (ages 15-24); in fact, beginning at age 20, men who have sex with other men represent the largest transmission category, highlighting the continued high risk of young gay and bisexual males for HIV infection and the need for consistently reinforcing prevention strategies.

**SETTING:** HIV prevention and social research setting. People working with youth.

**PROJECT:** To support the use of effective interventions based on youth needs and realities, and to brainstorm and get feedback from peer educators and youth allies on the barriers that LGBTQ youth face on a day-to-day basis.

**RESULTS:** Understanding the barriers and needs of youth to achieve safer sex, barriers to addressing these issues, and strategies to decrease the number of youth exposures to HIV, thus leading to a drop in diagnosed AIDS cases in early adulthood.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** This workshop will serve as a prevention guide to people working with GLBTQ youth. Counselors/peers will get tools to encourage them to seek solutions to their prevention obstacles based on cultural differences.

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